

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A wireless electronic messaging system for use in an aircraft, comprising:
 - a ground-based server;
 - an airborne server on the aircraft;
 - a wireless up-link communicatively coupled to the ground-based server and the airborne server;
 - a display unit visible to an end-user to display partial information related to electronic messaging; and
 - an input unit responsive to the user to select electronic messaging components for transmission from the ground-based server to the airborne server.
2. The system of claim 1, further comprising a wireless down-link communicatively coupled to the airborne server and the ground-based server wherein the airborne server transmits user selection data to the ground-based server.
3. The system of claim 2 wherein the ground-based server forwards selected components of the electronic messaging to the airborne server via the up-link based on the user selection data.
4. The system of claim 1 wherein the partial information comprises electronic mail (email) information related to at least one of a list of email information comprising an email sender, an email subject, and email attachments.
5. The system of claim 4 wherein the partial information related to email comprises size data indicative of a size of an email and/or an email attachment.

6. The system of claim 4 wherein the partial information related to email attachments comprises cost data indicative of a cost to transfer an email and/or email attachment via the up-link.

7. The system of claim 1 for use with multiple end-users, the system further comprising a display and a corresponding input unit for each of the plurality of end-users wherein one of the display units is visible to each of the end-user to display partial information related to electronic messaging for the individual end-user and the corresponding input unit is operable by the individual end-user to select electronic messaging components for the individual end-user.

8. A wireless electronic messaging system for use in an aircraft to permit electronic message communication between an airborne computer operated by a passenger and a ground-based electronic messaging system via a wireless communication link, comprising:

- an airborne computing device on the aircraft to receive partial information related to electronic messaging for the passenger;

- an output portion of the airborne computing device to route the received partial information to the passenger's computer; and

- an input portion of the airborne computing device to receive selection data from the passenger computer.

9. The system of claim 8, further comprising a transmitter coupled to the airborne computing device to transmit the selection data to the ground-based electronic messaging system via the wireless communication link.

10. The system of claim 8 wherein the airborne computing device receives selected components of the electronic messaging via the wireless communication link based on the user selection data.

11. The system of claim 8 wherein the partial information comprises electronic mail (email) information related to at least one of a list of email information comprising an email sender, an email subject, and email attachments.

12. The system of claim 10 wherein the partial information is related to size data indicative of a size of an email and email attachment, if any.

13. The system of claim 10 wherein the partial information related to email attachments comprises cost data indicative of a cost to transfer an email and email attachment, if any, via the up-link.

14. A wireless electronic messaging system for use in an aircraft to permit electronic message communication between a passenger computing device operated by a passenger and a ground-based electronic messaging system via a wireless communication link, comprising:

an airborne computing device on the aircraft to communicate with the passenger computing device while onboard the aircraft; and

a proxy server to convert airborne mail commands to email commands corresponding to the passenger email service provider to thereby permit the passenger to access a passenger email account.

15. The system of claim 14 wherein the proxy server comprises a ground-based proxy server portion to serve as a proxy for the passenger computing device with respect to the passenger service provider.

16. The system of claim 14 wherein the proxy server comprises an airborne proxy server portion to serve as a proxy for the passenger service provider with respect to the passenger computing device.

17. The system of claim 14 wherein the airborne mail commands are JavaMail commands.

18. The system of claim 14 wherein the proxy server parses data returned from the passenger email account to extract data for display on the passenger computer.

19. The system of claim 18 wherein the parsed data comprises email summary information.

20. The system of claim 14, further comprising an airborne receiver to receive partial information related to email messages for the passenger.

21. The system of claim 20 wherein the partial information related to email messages comprises cost data indicative of a cost to transfer email messages to the aircraft.

22. The system of claim 14 wherein the passenger email service provider provides web-based access to the passenger email account, the proxy server converting the airborne mail commands to web-based commands to enable passenger access to the passenger email account.

23. The system of claim 14 wherein the passenger email service provider provides access to the passenger email account using an industry standard comprising a selected one of POP3 and SPOP3, the proxy server converting the airborne mail commands to commands for the selected industry standard to enable passenger access to the passenger email account.

24. A wireless electronic messaging system for use in an aircraft to permit electronic message communication between an airborne computer operated by a passenger

and a ground-based electronic messaging system via a wireless communication link, comprising:

airborne means for receiving partial information related to electronic messaging for each of a plurality of passengers;

routing means for routing the received partial information to the respective passenger's computer; and

means for receiving selection data from the computer of at least one passenger.

25. The system of claim 24, further comprising means for transmitting the selection data to the ground-based electronic messaging system via the wireless communication link.

26. The system of claim 24, further comprising means for receiving selected components of the electronic messaging via the wireless communication link based on the user selection data.

27. The system of claim 24 wherein the partial information comprises electronic mail (email) information related to at least one of a list of email information comprising an email sender, an email subject; and email attachments.

28. The system of claim 24 wherein the partial information related to email attachments comprises size data indicative of a size of an email and email attachment, if any.

29. The system of claim 24 wherein the partial information related to email attachments comprises cost data indicative of a cost to transfer an email and an email attachment, if any, via the up-link.

30. A wireless electronic messaging system for use in an aircraft to permit electronic message communication between a passenger computing device operated by a

passenger and a ground-based electronic messaging system via a wireless communication link, comprising:

means for coupling an airborne computing device with the passenger computing device while onboard the aircraft;

means for converting airborne mail commands to email commands corresponding to the passenger email service provider to thereby permit the passenger to access a passenger email account; and

means for communicating between the aircraft and a ground-based station.

31. The system of claim 30 wherein the means for converting comprises a ground-based portion to serve as a proxy for the passenger computing device with respect to the passenger service provider.

32. The system of claim 30 wherein the means for converting comprises an airborne portion to serve as a proxy for the passenger service provider with respect to the passenger computing device is located on the aircraft and the means for communicating transmits the web-enabled email commands to the ground-based station.

33. The system of claim 30 wherein the airborne mail commands are JavaMail commands.

34. The system of claim 30 wherein the means for converting parses data returned from the passenger email account to thereby extract data for display on the passenger computer.

35. The system of claim 34 wherein the parsed data comprises email summary information and the means for coupling provides the passenger computing device with the email summary information.

36. The system of claim 30 wherein the means for communicating transmits information related to email messages for the passenger and an airborne radio to receive the information.

37. The system of claim 36 wherein the information related to email messages comprises cost data indicative of a cost to transfer email messages to the aircraft.

38. The system of claim 30 wherein the passenger email service provider provides web-based access to the passenger email account, the means for converting functioning to convert the airborne mail commands to web-based commands to enable passenger access to the passenger email account.

39. The system of claim 30 wherein the passenger email service provider provides access to the passenger email account using an industry standard comprising a selected one of POP3 and SPOP3, the means for converting functioning to convert the airborne mail commands to commands for the selected industry standard to enable passenger access to the passenger email account.

40. A computer-readable media to control wireless electronic messaging in an aircraft to permit electronic message communication between an airborne computer operated by a passenger and a ground-based electronic messaging system via a wireless communication link, comprising computer instructions that cause a computer to:

- receive partial information related to electronic messaging for a passenger;
- route the received partial information to the passenger's computer; and
- receive selection data from the passenger computer.

41. The computer-readable media of claim 40, further comprising instructions to transmit the selection data to the ground-based electronic messaging system via the wireless communication link.

42. The computer-readable media of claim 40, further comprising instructions to receive selected components of the electronic messaging via the wireless communication link based on the passenger selection data.

43. The computer-readable media of claim 40 wherein the partial information comprises electronic mail (email) information related to at least one of a list of email information comprising an email sender, an email subject, and, if the email includes and email attachment, email attachments.

44. The computer-readable media of claim 40 wherein the partial information related to email comprises size data indicative of a size of an email and email attachment, if any.

45. The computer-readable media of claim 40 wherein the partial information related to email and email attachments, if any, comprises cost data indicative of a cost to transfer an email and email attachment, if any, via the up-link.

46. A computer-readable media for wireless electronic messaging system in an aircraft to permit electronic message communication between a passenger computing device operated by a passenger and a ground-based electronic messaging system via a wireless communication link, comprising computer instructions that cause a computer to:

couple an airborne computing device with the passenger computing device while onboard the aircraft;

convert airborne mail commands to email commands corresponding to the passengers email service provider to thereby permit the passenger to access a passenger email account; and

communicate between the aircraft and the ground-based station.

47. The computer-readable media of claim 46 wherein the airborne mail commands are JavaMail commands.

48. The computer-readable media of claim 46, further comprising instructions to cause the computer to parse data returned to from the passenger email to thereby extract data for display on the passenger computer.

49. The computer-readable media of claim 46 wherein the parsed data comprises email summary information and the computer instructions cause the computer to provide the passenger computing device with the email summary information.

50. The computer-readable media of claim 46 wherein the computer instructions cause the computer to transmits information related to email messages for the passenger and an airborne radio to receive the information.

51. The computer-readable media of claim 50 wherein the information related to email messages comprises cost data indicative of a cost to transfer email messages to the aircraft.

52. A method for wireless electronic messaging in an aircraft to permit electronic message communication between an airborne computer operated by a passenger and a ground-based electronic messaging system via a wireless communication link, comprising:

receiving partial information related to electronic messaging for each of a plurality of passengers;

routing the received partial information to the respective passenger's computer;
and

receiving selection data from the computer of at least one passenger.

53. The method of claim 52, further comprising transmitting the selection data to the ground-based electronic messaging system via the wireless communication link.

54. The method of claim 52, further comprising receiving selected components of the electronic messaging via the wireless communication link based on the user selection data.

55. The method of claim 52 wherein the partial information comprises electronic mail (email) information related to at least one of a list of email information comprising an email sender, an email subject, and email attachments.

56. The method of claim 52 wherein the partial information related to email attachments comprises size data indicative of a size of an email and any email attachment.

57. The method of claim 52 wherein the partial information related to email attachments comprises cost data indicative of a cost to transfer an email and any email attachment via the up-link.

58. A method for electronic messaging in an aircraft to permit electronic message communication between a passenger computing device operated by a passenger and a ground-based electronic messaging system via a wireless communication link, comprising:

coupling an airborne computing device with the passenger computing device while onboard the aircraft;

converting airborne mail commands to email commands corresponding to the passenger's email service provider to thereby permit the passenger to access a passenger email account; and

communicating between the aircraft and a ground-based station.

59. The method of claim 58 wherein converting airborne commands is performed by a ground-based portion to serve as a proxy for the passenger computing device with respect to the passenger's email service provider.

60. The method of claim 58 wherein converting airborne commands is performed by an airborne portion to serve as a proxy for the passenger service provider with respect to the passenger computing device.

61. The method of claim 58 wherein the airborne mail commands are JavaMail commands.

62. The method of claim 58, further comprising parsing data returned to from the passenger email account to thereby extract data for display on the passenger computer.

63. The method of claim 62 wherein the parsed data comprises email summary information, the method further comprising providing the passenger computing device with the email summary information.

64. The method of claim 58 wherein a ground-based station transmits information related to email messages for the passenger, the method further comprising providing the information to the passenger computer.

65. The method of claim 64 wherein the information related to email messages comprises cost data indicative of a cost to transfer email messages to the aircraft.